

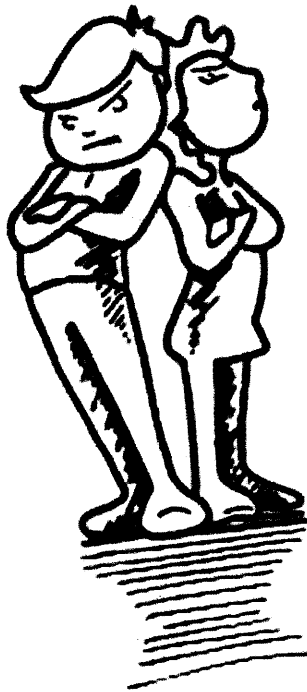
Relationships 101



based on
the 10 Non-negotiables

Cover art by Tom Schenkelberg

Relationships 101



based on

Barbara Mary Muhl's
The 10 Non-Negotiables

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Acknowledgement

"The 10 Non-negotiables"® were brought to us by Barbara Mary Muhl, a student of Joel Goldsmith and an Infinite Way® teacher.

Much of The Relationships 101 Workshop Handbook is based on live tapes of the classes in which Barbara presented the non-negotiables to a group of her students. It may or may not be an accurate transmittal of the work as it was revealed to and through her.

We acknowledge our huge debt to her for blazing this path.

Introduction

"Straightening ourselves out spiritually begins by straightening out our human relationships. Relationships are what living is all about. We want to learn to live in harmony, with understanding and fulfillment."

Barbara Mary Muhl

The Relationships 101 Handbook is about relationships between well-intentioned adults. It is designed for those who want to improve their adult relationships by growing spiritually. It is not about parent/child relationships, nor is it about relationships between "tall people" which pretend to be adult/adult but are actually adult/child or child/child.

Our relationships succeed or fail because of our behaviors. Barbara Muhl identified the 10 behaviors that are the most destructive to successful relationships and 10 corresponding constructive behaviors that accomplish what the destructive behaviors intended while enhancing the relationship. She called this list of constructive and destructive behaviors the 10 Non-Negotiables (10NNs).

Barbara taught that every relationship is an implied contract because each party has expectations about what they will get from the relationship and what

they are bringing to it. The implied contract is usually entered into ignorantly, because the terms of the contract are not made explicit, and the two parties usually have different expectations. Successful relationships require that the contract be made explicit. The 10NNs are clauses in a contract for behavior between two adults that will ensure a joyful, respectful, mutually supportive, and spiritually fulfilling relationship. They are the spiritual laws of relationships. They cannot be broken without damaging the relationship.

The 10 clauses in the contract are "non-negotiable" in that there is to be no negotiation about which of the 10 pairs of behaviors to include in the contract. All are accepted as necessary for successful relationships. We might say to a person we are interested in establishing an adult relationship with, "I cannot survive in a relationship if I cannot have these 10 constructive behaviors in it, nor can I survive in a relationship in which any of these 10 destructive behaviors happen. If we are to be in a successful long term relationship we must agree that we both will give our best effort to never indulge in any of these 10 negative behaviors, replacing them with the corresponding positive behaviors." We may not be able to see that these are non-negotiable until we are able to live by them ourselves. Then our lives will

be so changed that we will not be willing to settle for anything less.

The question arises, "Am I capable of fulfilling the terms of the contract?" This workshop is not so much about laying down rules on others - it is about our own behaviors that have to change if we are to experience successful relationships. If we can't fulfill the contract we have no right to expect others to do so.

Of course, perfect adherence to these non-negotiables is very difficult. Sometimes we will find ourselves unable to adopt the constructive behavior. This is where the spiritual growth comes in. We will discover that when we fail it is because of some deep fear we have that we will be hurt or rejected by the other, because of some need that we are trying to get the other to fulfill, rather than fulfilling it ourselves, or simply because of some old conditioning about how things ought to be. We do the destructive behavior because it is part of our now out of date arsenal of survival mechanisms. Becoming aware of these deeply ingrained survival techniques which no longer work, and are in fact the very cause of our lack of success in relationships, is part of the process.

Please keep in mind that this work is about behavior. It does not address anyone's thoughts. We can't control our thoughts; we can't control our feelings;

we can learn to control our behaviors, and by doing so our feelings and thoughts will change.

This handbook was originally designed as the workbook for the Relationships 101 Workshops held at Leelaa, a spiritual community in Hermosa Beach, CA. The principles contained herein have turned out to be so powerful that we have expanded the book in the hopes that it will be a useful guide to couples or individuals who want to undertake the work on their own.

As the work proceeds, many discover that giving up some of their destructive behaviors is difficult. In order to explain this, we need to understand some things about the human condition.

The Human Condition

The human condition is dual. We are spiritual beings having human experiences.

Spiritual being refers to the truth, as taught by numerous spiritual masters including Joel Goldsmith, that we are individual expressions of God Consciousness. In the workshops at Leelaa we refer to the spiritual being part of us as our **spiritual-adult**. The spiritual adult is the part of us that is God-conscious, aware of the presence of God. The amount of spiritual adult we have **in gear** at any particular moment is the extent to which we are aware of the presence of God at that particular moment. The spiritual adult is based in love. It knows there is abundance, that receiving is the *result* of giving, that there is enough for everyone, that all of our needs are being met, and that what I do to you I am doing to myself.

Humanhood, our word for the human experiences, refers to times when we are immersed in human consciousness. By human consciousness, we mean the collective human consciousness, the sum of all the individual human's concepts and beliefs, referred to in various metaphysical teachings as world mind, mortal mind or carnal mind. Human consciousness contains all the false beliefs about being separate from God,

being on our own, and needing to take care of ourselves.

Human consciousness is based in fear. These fears (not getting what we want, getting what we don't want, losing what we have, being abused, abandoned, ignored etc.) are part of human consciousness, the unenlightened consciousness. These are the fears that drive us to "take care of ourselves", "look out for ourselves", "make sure we get ours", and "do unto others before they do unto us". Behaviors based on these fears prevent good relationships.

We begin our human experiences deeply conditioned to believe all these false human beliefs. We also bring with us into this lifetime the fears and false beliefs from our previous lifetimes. Some of these fears are of events that resulted in our deaths. These are our deepest fears, which have major effects on this lifetime. They are often repressed*. The human mind represses things it is incapable of dealing with.

* In the Script and Kid Workshops we refer to the repressed personality centers containing these fears as "kids", and the stories they tell us as "scripts". See Appendix C, Script, and Appendix D, Kid, for more information. We'll use the words "**kid**" and "**stories**" in this handbook.

The spiritual path consists of uncovering and correcting all of our false human beliefs about the nature of God and reality, moving from humanhood to spiritual adult, moving the alignment of our personal center of consciousness from human consciousness to God Consciousness. Relationship 101 work involves replacing behaviors based in human consciousness (fear) with behaviors based in God Consciousness (love). All the destructive sides of the 10NNs are human behaviors, based in fear. They foster separation. All the constructive sides of the 10NNs are spiritual adult behaviors, based in love. They foster togetherness, oneness. Adopting them requires the presence of some amount of spiritual adult.

Spiritual Axioms and Truths

Here are 14 spiritual axioms and truths that underlie the Relationships 101 Workshop. An axiom is defined as "a self-evident truth that is accepted as a rule, principle or law, without proof," but we do not ask you to accept these axioms. We will never ask you to accept any of the spiritual truths that are presented in this book. We simply ask you to read them with an open mind, and to try to understand what they are saying. We are confident that your own experience, as you do the workshop, will prove them to you. Come back to this section periodically and take another look at them.

The first axiom is a fundamental principle of all metaphysics and mysticism. The others are some truths collected from Barbara Muhl tapes, which apply to all of the NNs rather than a particular one, as well as some we've added, based on our experience with this work.

1. Our individual experience of life is determined by the content of our own individual consciousness. We are conditioned to believe that things outside of us strike our consciousness, producing our experience. This spiritual principle says it's the other way around: *it's the content of our consciousness, our beliefs, and our fears that produces our experience of*

things outside of us. It's not "seeing is believing," it's really "believing is seeing."

For example, if we are looking forward to some time in the future when everything is going to be all right, we are believing that things are not all right now, and that is our experience. This axiom says that it will continue to be our experience that things are not all right for as long as we continue to look forward to things being all right. The time we are looking forward to will never come. Some people spend their entire lives waiting throughout an endless series of events that they hope will make everything all right.

Another way of stating this axiom is: Nothing happens to me that is not a reflection of my own beliefs and conditioning.

2. My behavior has damaged my relationships. The behavior of others may have also damaged my relationships, but I am only responsible for my behavior and I must clean it up first.

3. The only sound basis for an adult relationship is to enhance mutual spiritual growth. The purpose of the universe is not to provide us with a happy, carefree life, or an early retirement to a house with a white picket fence. The purpose of the universe is individual spiritual growth. The universe is like a spiritual

university. It presents us with a series of lessons designed to allow us (or force us, if we're unwilling students) to grow spiritually, from our ignorant humanhood state to an enlightened transcendental consciousness. If we don't find the spiritual solutions to a lesson it is presented again, in a different form. When we do solve it spiritually the next lesson is presented.

Relationships are a grand arena in which to grow spiritually because relationships bring up so many lessons.

4. Any relationship based on need won't work. If we are needy, we will not be able to free other parties to fulfill themselves, nor will we be free to fulfill ourselves, or even to simply be ourselves, for fear that others might leave us.

5. What we hide is what we keep. (In Alcoholics Anonymous they say, "you are as sick as your secrets.") We don't need to share everything with everyone, but if we can tell our deep dark secrets to at least one person, and find that we are accepted as we are, we become free to move on.

Also, saying something aloud, or, better yet, writing it down, makes it more real - we "real-ize" it. Then we are more able and more likely to work with or on it.

6. Lies only have power over us when we fail to recognize them.

7. Everyone (including you) is (and always has been) doing the best she or he can.

- Every mistake we have ever made in our lives was because we were ignorant of something at that moment, something we needed to know in order to avoid the mistake.
- If we had known better, we would have done better.

8. Guilt and remorse are not useful reactions to mistakes. The effective reaction is to

- See the error.
- Acknowledge it.
- Determine to do better next time.

Guilt is not part of the solution and, by the way, worry is not part of preparation.

9. Every compulsive behavior is motivated by the terror of being powerless. Barbara discovered that being powerless is the single most intolerable state in which human beings can find themselves. Human beings will do almost anything to gain some control (or the illusion of some control) over situations.

10. Friendship is only possible between adults. Friendship requires equality. Our relationship with our children can

be friendly, but it is not, and cannot be, a friendship.

11. Nobody is cause for another's reality. Our own concepts (the content of our consciousness) cause what we call our reality. You cannot cause me to be joyful or in pain. It is my reaction to what you do, my own beliefs, fears and conditioning, that "causes" my pain or joy.

12. Talking about a problem reinforces it (unless we are in a therapeutic situation).

- Hashing it over sustains it.
- We need to find a method to solve the problem and get to work.

13. Love is simply unconditional acceptance.

14. Every act based in human consciousness is based in fear; every act based in God-consciousness is based in love.

The Workshop

The Relationship 101 Workshop is an 11-session workshop. It is intended for both couples and individuals.

We introduce one NN each week and have a review at the last session. We go over the bullets under the constructive and destructive sides of the NN, making sure we're clear about what behaviors are positive and what behaviors are negative. We also review some possible motivations for breaking the contract through destructive behaviors, such as fears, needs or conditionings.

Then we practice that NN during the week, trying to catch ourselves when we're engaging, or about to engage, in the destructive behavior, and seeing if we can substitute the constructive one.

At the next session we spend time sharing about our successes and failures during the preceding week, as well as about any fears, needs or conditioning we have uncovered that were driving us to choose the destructive behavior. The sharing is a very important part of the process. Hearing other's experiences often makes us aware of things we overlooked during our own practice. Then we move on to the next NN.

The non-negotiables are listed in order of progressive difficulty. As we proceed with attempting to fulfill the positive side of successive NNs, we may feel more

and more vulnerable. We are more likely to encounter our hidden fears. Not giving in to them may require us to have more spiritual adult in gear. This workshop is a spiritual adult muscle builder. It helps us develop the ability to stop trying to protect ourselves and enables us to start thinking about our relationships. As we do this our relationships improve dramatically. Even just learning to communicate regularly, clearly and without emotion is a huge step forward in any relationship.

Remember, not everyone wants a relationship based on the 10NNs. It is not our right or our job to give these principles to people who don't ask for them. It is only important that we fulfill them. We have no right to expect others to fulfill them if we can't, and we have no right to expect them from people who haven't agreed to do so, but we do have the responsibility to become able to eliminate the destructive components from our own behavior, and we do have the right to insist that anyone wanting to have an adult relationship with us contract with us to work on developing the ability to fulfill them.

Working with a Partner

Those of us who are working with a partner will want to pay close attention to developing good communication skills with each other. **It is important that partners agree at the beginning of the**

workshop that they will work together to become aware of their behaviors by applauding each other's constructive behaviors and by pointing out each other's destructive ones as they are happening. This helps us learn to recognize when we are engaging in the positive and the negative behaviors and to eliminate the negative by choosing the positive.

Progress for partners will be greatly enhanced by scheduling a mid-week meeting to review the first 3 or 4 days, to point out strengths and weakness in each other and in the relationship in a non-confrontational manner. It is essential that both partners be in spiritual adult during these sessions. In the Methods section of this handbook there are techniques for delivering and accepting feedback. Partners must learn to identify their own and each other's shortcomings in a loving and constructive manner. The development of the communication skills necessary to discuss this work while it is in progress, using the vocabulary introduced in the week's NN, is a significant benefit of doing this work.

When we are trying to communicate, we also learn to be alert for emotions that might come up. **Please read Appendix B, Feelings vs. Emotions, to learn the difference between feelings and emotions, right now.** We can often recognize emotion in ourselves by a

tight feeling in our solar plexus, or a rise in blood pressure, or an increase in pulse and breathing rates, or any other symptoms of the fight or flight syndrome. They let us know fear is rising. If uncontrolled fear is expressed the situation becomes emotional, and communication ends. Our partner will probably respond with emotion. If that happens, forget about trying to accomplish anything. Nothing positive is going to happen if emotion is present. There is nothing to do except disengage. We try to agree to reconvene later when the emotion is not present.

We suggest that partners working together outside of the workshop also work with one NN each week. They can sit down together and read the material relating to the NN they are going to practice, discussing all the points listed under it until they come to clarity and agreement about what the constructive and destructive behaviors are. They will also want to review the possible motivations for breaking the contract, looking for any that might apply personally. Then they practice the NN all week, perhaps meeting for review somewhere in the middle of the week, and come together again at the beginning of the next week. They can begin the next session by sharing their experiences working with the previous week's NN.

Individuals

Individuals doing this work, who are not in a primary relationship, can practice the NNs in all their adult relationships. Individuals who are in a primary relationship can practice on their primary relationship but cannot expect reciprocation or help since no contract has been agreed upon. But they will be pleasantly surprised at how simply changing their own behaviors changes the relationship.

Individuals have a different set of problems. They don't have a partner to applaud their successes and point out their weaknesses. The challenge for individuals is that the other adults with whom they are in relationships have not agreed to the contract, so they can't be expected to play by the rules. We get to practice the NNs but we can have no expectations of others.

It is important, if we are doing this work individually, that we do a nightly review of the day, looking back for occasions when we employed a destructive behavior, since we have no partner to help point them out. When we find one we can observe how that behavior worked for us, what kind of communication ensued, and speculate on how the constructive behavior might have worked. We can also try to see what the motivation was that led to the destructive behavior. What were we afraid of? What did we need that we feared we couldn't get using the

constructive behavior? We also need to applaud ourselves for the times when we did use the constructive behaviors.

The Goals of the Workshop

The Relationship 101 Workshop has five goals:

1. To help us grow spiritually.
2. To help us become aware of the behaviors we engage in that are destructive to our relationships, and to identify, for each destructive behavior, an alternative constructive behavior which will accomplish what we intended better than the destructive one, while enhancing the relationship.
3. To give us an opportunity to practice the constructive behaviors.
4. To help couples or partners develop an ability to communicate about their relationship and these critical behaviors, and to develop a vocabulary to use when discussing their relationship.
5. To help us discover the needs, fears and/or conditionings which have been driving us to choose the destructive behaviors.

Everyone in the workshop will be at a different level with respect to each of these goals. Some will already have a well-established daily spiritual practice; others will have none. Some will merely need to see that certain of their behaviors are destructive in order to stop them and improve their relationships; others will find it very

difficult to give up their destructive behaviors. Some couples will already have excellent communication, and only need to develop a vocabulary in this area; others will have a habit of being defensive and protecting themselves, or of getting emotional, and will have practically no useful level of communication.

How much we get out of this workshop depends upon how much work we put into it. Here are some suggestions about how you can use this workshop to make progress in all five of the primary goals:

Goal 1: Without growing spiritually our relationships will stay the same. It is our level of spiritual development that determines our experience [Axiom 1]. The workshop is not about getting our partners to conform to a set of rules that will make our relationships better. It is about becoming able, ourselves, to behave in ways that permit loving, fulfilling relationships. It is about learning to operate from love rather than from fear. The 10NNs are progressive in difficulty. As we move through them we will encounter more fears and vulnerabilities. We will have to get more and more spiritual adult in gear. As we develop the ability and the practice of behaving in accordance with the constructive sides of the 10NNs, we will rise in spiritual consciousness, and our experience and our relationships

will reflect this. Eventually those who are not willing and able to conduct relationships conforming to these spiritual principles will be removed from our lives.

Our individual work will be enhanced by:

- Developing a regular meditation practice. **(This is the 1st of the methods described in Appendix A, Developing Spiritual Consciousness. Please read it now.)** Simply sitting quietly for two or three minutes every morning, perhaps after reading a page or two of some spiritual writing, will begin to open us to all the invisible spiritual realities that make spiritual growth possible. Couples who meditate together are affirming their oneness with each other. The power of a regular meditation practice cannot be stressed enough.
- Each morning, reviewing the bullets under the NN currently being worked on, to bring it to the front of our mind before we go out into the world.
- Each evening, reviewing the day (all of us, not just those working alone), looking for occasions when we indulged in destructive behaviors, observing the results of those behaviors to see clearly that they don't work, and examining ourselves to see if we can uncover

the need, fear or conditioning that drove us to that behavior.

- Each week, after the new non-negotiable is introduced, taking it home and examining our own behaviors to see if we can find examples of both the positive and negative sides of it. Perhaps we will be able to see how the destructive behavior has been damaging our relationships.

Goals 2 and 3: These will be accomplished by conscientiously doing the work, either in the workshop or independently.

Goal 4: This goal will be accomplished to the extent that couples make the effort to communicate.

- It is very important that we agree at the beginning of the workshop to work together, pointing out each other's successes and failures without emotion, and to meet at mid-week to discuss our work up to that point. These discussions, and practicing pointing out strengths and weaknesses, may be quite difficult at the beginning if we have no experience in having emotion free discussions, but with practice it will become easier, and this is the communication that will make a joyful relationship possible.
- Meditating together is active work on togetherness, oneness.

- Reviewing the current NN together every morning will offer another opportunity for practicing communication, and will bring the practice to the front of our minds.

Goal 5: Uncovering the needs, fears and conditionings that underpin our destructive behaviors is primarily individual work. It is significant enough for us to devote a separate section to its discussion. The idea is to discover the often-repressed fears, the needs and the conditionings that have been causing the behaviors that have been destroying our relationships.

Working With Fears, Neediness, and Conditioning

Our fears are, without exception, trying to protect us from situations that *will not happen* in relationships between well-intentioned adults. They are out-of-date survival mechanisms that have no place in our life today. They need to be identified and seen clearly, which includes seeing clearly the results of behaving in accordance with the fears. Then they'll stop.

Our neediness also needs to be seen clearly. Neediness has no place in adult relationships [Axiom 4]. Usually they turn out to be things we don't really need (or want), just old ideas about our needs. Always they turn out to be things we should be providing for ourselves or things that will be provided through a regular spiritual practice (possibly through our relationship, but as a result of our practice). When we see our neediness clearly, and see the price our relationship pays for it, it will stop.

The other killer in relationships is our conditioning. We have been trained throughout our lives to believe that certain things are right, others wrong, and that things *should be* a certain way. Our partners may well have been conditioned to believe that different things are right or wrong, and that things *should be* a different way. Our conditioning - every concept about how

things "should be", or "ought to be" or "are supposed to be" - every idea about right, wrong, good or bad - is completely arbitrary, is based entirely on what your parents, teachers and peer groups have been conditioned to believe, is completely opposite to the conditioned beliefs of other equally righteous groups, and bears no relationship to reality. Also any ideas we have about "our rights" are equally conditioned and not based on anything real. We need to see clearly that these beliefs about how things are or should be have no truth to them, but just happen to be the ones we were conditioned with. Then the behaviors based on them will stop.

Our work to achieve the 5th goal is to try to see clearly what led us to employ the destructive behavior rather than the constructive one. This work can sometimes be done in the moment, if we can catch ourselves when we are about to do a destructive behavior, but more frequently we will have to do this work in retrospect, when our partner points out that we behaved destructively, or when our nightly review reveals a destructive behavior. The work involves analyzing the event. **To get the most out of the workshop make a pact with yourself right now to do a nightly review, thinking back over the day, examining all of our adult interactions.**

Uncovering the Fears, Needs and Conditionings

We try to identify the fear that was preventing us from exhibiting the constructive behavior, the need that we were trying to fulfill with the destructive behavior, or the conditioning that led to the behavior. The difficulty in choosing the constructive behavior is determined by the intensity of the fear or need, or the depth of the conditioning. We may be completely unaware of them. Fears and needs are often partially or completely repressed. Conditioning may be so ingrained that it "just feels right" and is never even thought about. It may take some digging, but naming and claiming these fears, needs and conditionings is the first step in becoming free of them.

We ask ourselves, "What was I afraid of?" "What was I afraid might happen to me if I used the positive behavior?" "What did I think doing the negative behavior would prevent?" Or perhaps the behavior was based on some need: "What was I trying to get with the negative behavior?" "What could it accomplish for me?" Or perhaps it was a conditioned behavior: "Why did I think that was the right way to behave?"

If we spend some time quietly going within, asking questions like these, we will get insight, then answers. We'll discover that, in fact, there are not that many fears or needs that have been

driving our behaviors and destroying our relationships. Of course, the number of conditionings is potentially very large. The good news is they are not repressed, not buried deeply. They simply need to be seen for what they are - arbitrary beliefs. The bad news is they are unconscious, never questioned or examined. We may have to work hard to discover that things we take for granted are completely arbitrary.

If we're working with a partner it would be ideal if we can discuss our fears and vulnerabilities with our partner. We would then discover how unfounded they are and our partner would gain insight into what has been driving us to the destructive behaviors. The next time a similar situation arises they can help us work through the situation. This will quickly get rid of the fear and will greatly enhance the partnership communication. Similarly, talking together about a particular occurrence of a destructive behavior may help uncover the need or conditioning that led up to it. This kind of communication may be extremely difficult at first, but well-intentioned adults will attempt to develop the skill.

Stopping our Destructive Behavior

If we actually catch ourselves before we indulge in a destructive behavior, or even in the middle of it, possibly when our partner points it out, we can do

another thing to aid our growth. We can try to find some way in which we can risk doing the positive behavior, in just this one particular instance.

If the cause of the destructive behavior is fear based, we inquire as to how we could take care of ourselves sufficiently to allow us to do the constructive behavior. Under what conditions could we risk doing the positive behavior?

A good way to reduce our fear, once we identify what we are afraid is going to happen, is to ask ourselves what some other possible outcomes of the behavior are. What is the story we are telling ourselves about what is going to happen here if we do the constructive behavior? After a while we will begin to see that our fear is based on a story we're telling ourselves about what is going to happen, and we'll discover what the story is. Then we ask ourselves what some other possible stories are. Seeing that the outcome we fear is just one of many possible outcomes, and in fact probably not the most likely, may reduce the fear enough to let us risk the constructive behavior. We can also sometimes reduce the fear by asking what the worst thing that could happen is. The real worst-case scenario is usually much less fearsome than the unexamined fear we have been experiencing.

If the cause is based in need, we inquire how we could provide that need

for ourselves. Can we promise ourselves that we will fulfill our need if the other doesn't? Can we promise ourselves something that we will do for ourselves if the positive behavior doesn't have the desired result? This is all part of learning how to take care of ourselves and develop the independence necessary in adult relationships.

If it's neither fear nor need it's probably some piece of conditioning that needs to be uncovered. Sit down right there and see what you believe your "rights" are, how you believe things "are supposed to be" or what you believe is "right" or "good". When you uncover it, examine what that belief is based on, and see if you can give it up for the moment at least.

This kind of work on ourselves requires a great deal of willingness and diligence, but it is the work that will set us free. We need either to catch ourselves as we are about to indulge a negative behavior, or review our day, thinking back to when we did do a negative behavior, and analyze the situation as outlined above.

NOTE: If you find yourself unable stop the destructive behaviors you might want to look at the Script and Kid Workshops. If you can't fulfill the 10NNs, it's probably because you can't control your emotions. There's still a hurt or damaged kid that needs to be expressed. You're not going to be happy until

you're free of it. (See Appendices C,
Script and D, Kid for more information.)

Methods

Here are methods for delivering and receiving feedback or criticism that we have found useful in adult communication. They work because they require that we have some spiritual adult in gear.

How to deliver feedback or criticism:

- Begin with two honest positive statements.
- Follow them with your "truth."
- Finish with another honest positive statement.

For example, something like this: "You really work hard at this, and I appreciate all your efforts. In this particular instance, it didn't turn out so well... Thanks again for all your support."

How to handle feedback or criticism:

- Listen carefully and let the complaint enter. It might be valid (e.g. "I don't see it, but I'll entertain it as a possibility.").
- If, upon letting it enter, it finds no resting place, you can say, "I don't believe that is valid."
- If you want to continue in the relationship, you now need to come to a meeting of the minds. As long as you are calm and no emotion

enters, (i.e., as long as you're both in spiritual adult), you can discuss the issue.

The 10 Non-Negotiables

In the following sections, we have provided bullet points to clarify both the constructive and destructive sides of each NN. The bullet points are not in any particular order. Some are more obvious examples of the behavior under discussion; some are "lesser" examples. The inclusion of some of the lesser ones may surprise you, but if we are honest with ourselves, we will realize that they have destructive overtones that we may have been unaware of. The fact that society condones a behavior does not imply that it enhances relationships.

In the workshops, the groups read through and discuss the bullets in preparation for the week of practice. If you are doing this work with a partner we recommend that you sit down together at the beginning of the week see if you can identify any behaviors you exhibit that are destructive. If you are doing this work alone you still might try to make up a list of the behaviors you have which are constructive and destructive, and add to that list throughout the week.

There is also a "Breaking the NN Contract" section under each NN. Here we have listed some of the more common fears, needs and conditionings that might prevent doing the constructive behavior. We go over these in the workshop, as those of you who are doing

the work independently should, trying to see how particular fears, needs and conditioning could lead to the particular destructive behavior we're working with. We can all individually consider ourselves and see if we can identify others. There are three or four things that might lead us to break the contract that are true for all the NNs.

- For all of them, it's a given that negative and inappropriate behavior is more likely to occur if I am hungry, tired, or lonely - if I have had insufficient rest, nutrition, exercise and play.
- For all of them, it's a given that negative and inappropriate behavior is more likely to occur if I am in emotion.
- For all of them, it's a given that negative and inappropriate behavior will occur in the degree to which I am unconscious (overtaken momentarily by human consciousness)
- For all of them, it's a given that negative and inappropriate behavior will occur in the degree to which I am not a master of dialogue (without correct dialogue a sense of powerlessness takes hold), or due to inexperience in the art of persuasion, negotiation, or double-talk of the world)

Often, on our first pass through this work, we just become more aware of our

behaviors, and seem to accomplish little with respect to changing them. This is all right, especially if we have been able to identify some of the fears, needs and conditionings that compel us to exhibit the destructive behaviors. Seeing something is the necessary first step towards changing it. Don't beat yourself up for not being perfect - nobody is (or everybody is, just the way they are). If we can also learn to better communicate with our partners and others regarding our and their behaviors we have made a great stride towards better relationships. Good communication is essential.

1. Courtesy vs. Rudeness.

This is the simplest one. It is something all adults of good will want to perfect. Rudeness can abruptly terminate the meaningful communication upon which healthy relationships depend. Courtesy, on the other hand, greases the wheels of communication. We may be surprised, though, at some of the items listed as forms of rudeness. We will actually spend the time up to the next session becoming aware of how often we indulge in some of these "lesser" forms of rudeness. Try to notice how even these forms of rudeness are aggressive (even when they seem passive).

If we are doing this work with a partner, this first week is a good time to begin practicing telling each other when some behavior seems discourteous to us, using the methods on giving and receiving feedback and criticism. Agree with each other right away that this is what you want to do.

Courtesy

Courtesy simply means good manners. Without courtesy, good communication is impossible.

- Being courteous is not a restraint in our communication. It is important to be able to communicate everything. Courtesy is about finding the right way to say

something. Anything we need to say can be said courteously. We need to take the time necessary to find a courteous expression.

"I insist upon having courtesy in all my adult relationships."

Rudeness

Some forms of rudeness are:

- Interrupting (for example, not letting the other person finish a sentence or "tell their story").
- Usurping, which means "take over" or "take possession of", negates the other's existence (for example, answering for another person, even though they are present and were the one asked, or making decisions which involve another without consulting them). This denies their existence.
- Inattention/ignoring/not responding (also denying the other's existence).
- Being sarcastic (which is really just a way of saying something negative without taking responsibility for saying it).
- Teasing
- Humiliating
- Ridiculing
- Nagging
- Being impatient

- Using inappropriate language
- Condescending
- Trampling
- Using certain body language (for example, rolling our eyes).
- Not hearing (having an automatic tin ear)

"I will not tolerate rudeness in any of my adult relationships."

Breaking the Courtesy Contract = Rude Behavior

What prevents courtesy?

- When I believe I am more important than you or others (what I say or do is more important, usually resulting in impatience with you or others).
- When I demand that you listen to me (a form of thought control, usurping etc.).
- When I know more than you (and can state it better than you more quickly), an inflated sense of self-importance.
- When the only way I believe I can resist feeling powerless or helpless (i.e. frustrated) is to lash out rudely.
- When I'm ignorant of how to express good manners.

- When I need to take charge or be in control.
- When I need to build myself up by bringing you down, because I fear I'm not good enough.
- When I'm afraid to take responsibility for my actions.

2. Sensitivity vs. Aggression

Sensitivity means being sensitive to the other as a person. It does not mean touchiness. Sensitivity is a step up from courtesy. It requires being present, here, now, focusing on the other rather than on ourselves.

Aggression is a step up from rudeness.

Powerlessness ties these two together. The feeling of powerlessness leads to resentment, anger, and rage (in that order). Aggression can accompany any of these stages. Road rage on freeways has become the poster child for powerlessness leading to rage accompanied by aggression.

Sensitivity enables us to avoid making others feel powerless. Many of us have been in a relationship with someone so insensitive that we seldom, if ever, felt heard or understood correctly. We felt powerless.

Sensitivity

Sensitivity is:

- Seeing and hearing the other.
- Trying to understand her or him correctly ("wearing their shoes").
- Being alert enough to recognize where the other is coming from.

- Being present enough to avoid doing anything that would make someone feel powerless.
- Empowering others. "I see you, I hear you," is empowering.

One definition of life is that it is an organism that can respond to its environment. An increase in sensitivity means an increase in "response-ability." Therefore we become more alive as we become more sensitive.

"I must have sensitivity in all my adult relationships."

Aggression

Aggressive behaviors include:

- Yelling (or simply raising our voice)
- Physical abuse
- Ignoring (not seeing, not hearing)
- Withdrawing (passive aggression)
- Withholding (passive aggression)
- Impatience
- Overpowering
- Belittling

The most destructive form of aggression is making someone feel powerless. If we can learn to recognize when another is making us feel powerless, we will be able to do something about it.

We recognize the feeling of powerlessness by our desire to become aggressive. What do we do? We must stop it at the moment of imposition. It has to be stopped before it ever enters our consciousness. We need to get enough spiritual adult in gear to become centered, and recognize that the sense of powerlessness is a lie. We always have some options. We can try to find a way to address our apparent powerlessness, either through communication or withdrawing. This may be difficult if the one making us feel powerless is someone in a position of authority over us.

"I will not permit aggressive behavior in any of my adult relationships."

**Breaking the Sensitivity Contract =
Aggressive Behavior**

What prevents sensitivity?

- When I feel powerless. All of the forms of aggression are attempts to exert power.
 - When I am tired of being nagged, pushed, poked, and wrested from my freedom.
 - When I feel that I must tune out to get away from your nagging and demands.
 - When I believe you respond to me in a mean, brutal, or harsh

manner that makes me feel
powerless or hurt.

- When I feel vulnerable. Especially amongst men, it's easier and more "acceptable" to be aggressive than to be fearful or vulnerable.
- When I feel rejected or not good enough and need to take charge.
- When I have made you feel utterly powerless and you have tuned me out (and only by yelling, screaming am I seen or paid attention to).

There is a price for being sensitive. It takes time, energy, and focus. As we become more sensitive we realize that the payoff for sensitivity is far greater than the price.

3. Freedom vs. Oppression

In order to feel joy, we must be free. In order for there to be joy in a relationship, both parties have to be free. We cannot feel joy when we are being oppressed. A bird in the hand isn't really a bird. The work for the next week is to notice whenever we indulge in any oppressive behavior, observe how it feels and how it's affecting our relationships, and consciously free the other by stopping the oppression. If we find we can't, we need to discover the need, fear or conditioning that is preventing us.

Freedom

Allowing freedom, the positive behavior in this NN, is simply stopping all form of oppression, the negative ones. Freedom is the individual freedom to be ourselves. It is an ongoing state of consciousness. If my consciousness is free, I am free. Joy results from being involved in our own spiritual development - being involved consciously in our expanding consciousness. We need to be free to do this.

Freedoms include freedom to:

- Develop ourselves.
- Be who we are, not who the other wants us to be.
- Be wrong; make mistakes.

- Determine our own pace; listen to our own drummer.
- Find our own way of doing things.
- Pursue our own spiritual path.
- Come and go as we please.
- Express ourselves openly.

"I must have freedom in all my adult relationships."

Oppression

Oppression is doing anything that impedes someone's freedom, including:

- Clinging
- Crowding
- Controlling
- Being impatient
- Dominating
- Impeding
- Imposing upon
- Causing guilt
- Being needy
- Being pushy
- Being negative
- Criticizing (sometimes)
 - If it's uninvited, or the result of judgment, it's probably oppressive.

- If it's the invited result of evaluation, it may not be oppression.

"I will not accept oppression in any of my adult relationships."

What do we do when we are being oppressed? We must stop the imposition at the point of imposition. It may not be true that the other intends to impose, but it is all right to express that we feel imposed upon. "I know that you're probably not aware of it, but what you're doing is making me feel imposed upon."

And when that is said to you stop! Back off! Give the other time and space in which to consider whether or not they are really being oppressed. Later you can ask "How would you like me to say that, or do that?"

Breaking the Freedom Contract = Oppressive Behavior

What prevents freedom?

- When I believe I need (humanhood) rather than acknowledge I have (spiritual adult - all my needs are being met) and don't allow my partner freedom to grow intellectually, artistically, spiritually (e.g., by leaning on them).
- When I need something from you that I am not providing for myself.

- When I need to be in control.
- When I can't handle being alone.
- When I'm afraid of being ignored or treated indifferently.
- When I'm afraid you'll abandon me.
- When I feel threatened or insecure.

4. Truthfulness vs. Dishonesty

Nothing undermines a relationship quicker than lack of trust. Obviously we must be truthful if we want to be trusted. How difficult this one is depends on whether we have developed the habit of being truthful, and on how afraid we are that telling the truth will result in losing someone or something, or in being laughed at or ridiculed.

Truthfulness

No relationship can survive without truthfulness.

- As adults we must always say what we mean.
- We cannot be honest with anyone until we have been honest with ourselves. Some of us may have great difficulty in being honest with ourselves. We don't have the habit of self-introspection. Those of us with 12-step backgrounds may have an advantage here.
- Some people find this easy and others, who are unaccustomed to speaking truthfully, struggle greatly.
- We are always privileged not to speak.
 - Just because someone asks us a question, it doesn't mean we

have to answer it. We can simply say, "I am not ready to answer that," or "I don't choose to answer that."

- But if we do speak, we must speak the truth to the best of our ability.
- We do not have to say everything we know but what we do say must be the truth.
- Truthfulness has nothing to do with giving our opinion.
- Truthfulness is not an excuse to be brutally honest, although truth can hurt.
- Truthfulness is not about unsolicited honesty (for example, we aren't required to say something every time we overhear someone saying something we know is untrue).

"I must have truthfulness in all my adult relationships."

Dishonesty

Dishonesty will destroy a relationship, even if the other does not know you are being dishonest. They really do know subconsciously. Dishonesty includes:

- Lying, *including white lies*. Any kind of lie undermines trust. Once I know there are circumstances under which you will lie, I will always

wonder if the current situation is one of them.

- Allowing someone to believe an untruth when your silence is taken as co-signing (for example, if someone in the group says we all believe something, and you don't believe that, you need to say something).
- Exaggerating.
- Stating our opinion as if it were truth.
- Saying "just kidding" to avoid taking responsibility for something we said.
- Telling partial truths to give a false impression.

"I cannot survive in a dishonest relationship."

Breaking the Truthfulness Contract = Dishonest Behavior

What prevents truthfulness?

- When I'm not honest with myself I find it impossible to be honest with my partner (lack of self-examination (e.g., when I am not honest with myself about what I am feeling)).
- When I would rather win the argument than be honest with my partner or myself.
- When I feel pressured to say things I don't want to say.

- When I'm afraid that if I'm truthful I'll
 - lose.
 - be rendered powerless.
 - be judged, for example that I'm not good enough.
 - be laughed at.
 - be abandoned.
- When I believe my partner is withholding the truth from me.

5. Straightforwardness vs. Manipulation

It should be clear that the simplest way to let someone know what we want is to ask for it. Yet we often try to manipulate others into giving us what we want, or doing what we want, without having asked first. Why don't we just ask? *Because we're afraid to!*

Manipulation is any attempt to get what we want without exposing ourselves by asking for it. How difficult it will be to stop manipulating depends on how afraid we are of not getting the reaction we want.

Straightforwardness

Straightforwardness means being willing and able to ask for what we want. It also means being willing and able to express our feelings.

- First, we have to know what we want.
- Being straightforward means we must speak out and not beat around the bush.
- Straightforwardness is not about *getting* what we want. It is about *asking* for what we want, with no guarantee that we'll get it.
- Don't confuse straightforwardness with truthfulness.
 - If we talk, we must be truthful.

- If we want something, we must be straightforward.
- In order to ask for what we want, we have to know what we want.
 - If we don't know what we want in a relationship, we're lost.
- Straightforwardness doesn't mean hammering someone down. We do not demand; rather, we ask for what we want.

"All my adult relationships must be straightforward."

Manipulation

Manipulation is one of the most destructive aspects of relationships. People know deep down inside when someone is trying to manipulate them, and they resent it. If we want healthy relationships, we can't manipulate any more than we can lie. Often we're conditioned to manipulate rather than to be straightforward. We learn it growing up around parents, teachers, clergy, etc. who are not straightforward.

Manipulation is any method we use to get our own way *other than* asking for it in a straightforward manner, such as:

- Hinting, hoping they'll guess what we want.
- Lying so, they'll make a different decision than they would have otherwise.

- Getting sick, so they'll have to take care of us or do something for us.

If we don't get what we want by being straightforward and asking for it, we can *negotiate*. We can choose to use *persuasion*. Persuasion is not manipulative. Negotiation and persuasion are both necessary in a relationship. We present our case logically and reasonably, backing it up with fact and evidence. We don't let a drop of manipulation enter. We let our case stand on its own merit. This is an absolutely legitimate way to communicate in a relationship.

We must be careful not to settle for a compromise when compromising means agreeing to something that is not satisfying to either party. We get some spiritual adult in gear and discuss the matter until we arrive at an agreement about what the right choice is for both parties and the relationship. We talk until we arrive at an agreement that feels good to both of us.

If we haven't asked for what we want in a straightforward manner, then all of our attempts at persuasion are manipulation.

"I will not tolerate being manipulated in any of my adult relationships."

Breaking the Straightforwardness
Contract = Manipulative Behavior

What prevents straightforwardness?

- When I'm afraid that I won't get what I want.
- When I fear that I will be judged and rejected:
 - When I'm afraid that I will be ridiculed, or abandoned.
 - When I'm afraid that you'll think I don't fit in, or I'm not acceptable.
 - When I'm afraid that you'll laugh at me, or even leave me.
- When I'm afraid that by asking for what I want I will become vulnerable.
- When I'm afraid that I'm not deserving of what I want.
- When I'm conditioned to think I have to manipulate to get what I want.
- When I am unable to express my feelings.
- When game playing has become habitual.
- When I must keep the peace by any means or die (i.e. manipulation).
- When I'm not willing to not get what I want; I want what I want.
- When I have no experience or knowledge of how to negotiate or use

the art of persuasion/make a case
for what I want (so I manipulate;
that's what I'm conditioned to do):

6. Independence vs. Expectations

Independence means not being dependent, not being needy. This is a good time to remember Axiom 4: Any relationship base on need won't work. In any relationship we must maintain our independence.

Expectations are a primary source of discord, especially if we expect someone to do something we haven't directly asked for in a straightforward manner. The worst expectations are those where we think we are dependent on them being met. If we are dependent on anyone or anything we are not free. We do make plans based on others doing what they say they will do, but to the extent that our livelihood or happiness depends on it, we might better spend our energy on backup plans rather than expectations.

Independence

To achieve healthy relationships, we must maintain our individuality and independence. If I have no rights with respect to the other and no expectations of the other I am independent.

- Independence is not leaning on another, not depending on another for my life, or for my sense of personal worth, or for my self-respect.
- Two independent people walk side-by-side without leaning on each other.

"I must be able to be independent in all my adult relationships."

Expectations

An expectation is any ego demand, anything we think we have the right to expect that has not been contracted for.

- Expectations include expecting anything that has not been explicitly contracted for, particularly those things that we are conditioned to think the other person *should* do, and those based on our "rights."
 - Having no expectations means acknowledging that we have no rights.
- Expectations lead to resentments; resentments lead to anger; anger leads to rage.
 - The potential for resentment depends on our investment in having our expectation fulfilled.
- If we constantly have expectations, then we may be constantly disappointed and become aggressive and resentful toward the other person because of them.
- Whenever we are let down or disappointed, we had an expectation.
- Conflict arises out of clashing expectations.

- Expectations set up a resistance in the other person, even if they are not aware of it. We all know how depressing it is to walk into a room full of depressed people, even if they say nothing. They are radiating their depression. Similarly we radiate, and others pick up subliminally, whatever is going on within us, expectations, manipulations, lies, etc.

- We are naturally passionate about freedom, so we feel uncomfortable when someone has expectations of us.

- Write down all expectations you have of yourself. Those are the worst.
- Expectations are often based on knowing how things are "supposed to be," which is human conditioning, not truth.
- Having expectations is a spiritual error because it means we are looking outside ourselves for fulfillment. (E.g., Expecting justice from a court is a mistake. Lawyers, judges, witnesses and jurors are human, capable of error. Realizing harmony and justice as the nature of God, and having that materialize in our experience, is the better way.)

As an example, many of us have known couples that lived together for several years and, since it was going so well,

decided to get married. Six months later they couldn't stand each other and had to separate. What happened? When the two were living together the only expectations they had of each other were as "lover". When they got married there were suddenly four of them. Now a "wife" and a "husband" had been added to the relationship, with the expectations they had about those concepts. He was conditioned to have certain expectations of a wife (which she knew nothing about) and she had certain expectations of a husband (which he knew nothing about). These expectations went un-vocalized, weren't realized, and became resentments, then anger, and then maybe even rage. Because of concepts, expectations and lack of communication, lovers became enemies.

"I will not tolerate expectations in my adult relationships."

**Breaking the Independence Contract =
Expectation Behavior**

What prevents independence?

- When I am conditioned to know how things ought to be.
- When I am conditioned to know what people should do.
- When I have a fantasy about how people and/or things should be.

- When I'm unable to live in the *now* (expectations are grounded in the future).
- When I don't have the "I" in gear (ego and its demands are in gear).
- When I lack the ability to get someone's agreement on something (again lack of skill which leads to expectation).
- When I need to lean on you (rather than take care of myself).
- When I think you should be able to read my mind and know what I want.

7. Acceptance vs. Concepts

Acceptance is about being here now, with a quiet mind, seeing what is in front of us, rather than assuming things are as we think they are or as we think they should be.

Concepts include all the ideas we have about how people or things are or should be. Since our experience is the out-picturing of our own beliefs, our concepts determine and limit the possibilities in our experience. We will have experiences that conform to our concepts rather than seeing all that is possible.

This non-negotiable is about permitting ourselves to see *what is*, and allowing others to be who they really are, rather than seeing and reacting to our own concepts.

Acceptance

- Acceptance means accepting others as they are right now.
- Acceptance doesn't mean we have to like them. Liking them will happen when they become likeable.
- Acceptance means not imposing our concepts *about* the other *on* the other.
- Acceptance has nothing to do with making what is OK; it simply means seeing what is.

"I do not want to be in a relationship where acceptance is not present; where you do not accept me right where I am. It is your acceptance that frees me to change."

Concepts

Our concepts are the result of our human conditioning and our own experience. Having concepts is what humans do. Instead of identifying fears, needs and conditionings as we work this week, we identify the concepts we have about the ones with whom we are in relationship, and see if we can see how those concepts are preventing us from seeing what is, in fact, in front of us. Are we:

- anticipating the other's actions or reactions?
- assuming we know what they want or don't want, like or don't like, will or won't do?

We come to each relationship afresh each day, wondering who is there today, instead of *knowing* who is there.

- Concepts might as well be true since they govern our lives.
- Concepts are barriers to truth.
- If we hold onto concepts about ourselves, we are holding ourselves in bondage (as being inadequate, insufficient, ignorant, lacking in something etc.).

- If we hold onto concepts of others, we are denying them the opportunity to be who they really are around us, and denying ourselves the opportunity to experience who they really are.
- Good concepts are as destructive (limiting) as bad concepts.
- Expectations are about the future. Concepts are conclusions based in the past.
- Sentences with "supposed to," "ought to" or "should" are all about concepts. No such statement is spiritually true. What is is what should be.
- If we have a concept about another, we are having a relationship with our concept, not with the other.

Concepts are the source of all human misery.

"I cannot survive in a relationship where you only see your concepts about me. Don't lay your concepts on me."

Breaking the Acceptance Contract = Concept-ridden Behavior

What prevents acceptance?

- When I've been "in the world" too long without meditating and my thinking isn't coming from within (and thus more susceptible to malpractice, judgment, criticism, condemnation, erroneous concepts).

- When I'd rather think I know who you are that spend the time necessary to see who you are.
- When I'm too self-centered to look at you.

8. Time and Space Alone vs. Crowding

We need time and space alone as much as we need air to breathe. This is the time when we pursue our own spiritual growth and fulfillment, which will enhance the relationship, but which is distinct from the growth and fulfillment of the relationship. We need time and space alone to go within and discover our own spiritual truth. When we are being crowded, we are unable to do our spiritual work.

Time and Space Alone

- Time and space alone is an opportunity to enjoy aloneness. There is a difference between loneliness and aloneness. Aloneness is never lonely. In order to enjoy being alone, we must discover that we are alone (all-one) with God. We'll come to love that aloneness. The more we are alone the more we can increase our conscious contact with our spiritual center. Learning to be alone means that we will never again be lonely.
- Loneliness is human consciousness; all-one is transcendental consciousness. Alone is alone with your own reality.
- Time and space alone may mean a few seconds or a few years. Often a few minutes alone to go within is sufficient to meet the needs of the

moment like, for example, when we are in emotion; sometimes we need longer, like a weekend retreat, perhaps to pursue a spiritual answer; sometimes even more, like a sabbatical, to completely rejuvenate ourselves and our thinking.

- Time and space alone allows me to increase my own value. My value lies in the truth that I express, and I need time and space alone to discover truth.
- How do we get time and space alone? We schedule it! If we leave it to happenstance, it won't happen. If we're having trouble fitting everything in we might want to develop the discipline of scheduling our time. First we need to get a day planner. Then, when we address a new week, we first schedule everything that is essential for our own well-being. This includes sufficient rest, nutrition, exercise and play, as well as time alone for personal spiritual work. If we don't schedule them all in first, the never-ending requests (demands) on our time from others will prevent us from taking care of ourselves, and if we don't take care of ourselves we have nothing to give others.

"I must have, in all my adult relationships, partners who will allow me time and space alone."

Crowding

Crowding means getting too close, invading another's personal space without being invited.

Crowding includes:

- inordinate demands on another's time and attention. (It's up to each of us to decide how much of ourselves we want to give and for how long.)
- verbal pressure (including demanding answers).
- not giving me physical space.
- nagging.
- clinging.
- pushing.

Violation of someone's personal space sets up an immediate, unconscious resistance.

If we feel we are being imposed upon, we are being crowded. We need to stop this imposition as soon as it occurs. If we don't we'll feel frustration, which leads to resentment, then anger and finally rage. One possibility is to straightforwardly ask for some time and space.

"I cannot survive in a relationship in which I am constantly being crowded."

Breaking the Time and Space Alone Contract = Crowding Behavior

What prevents time and space alone?

- When I'm afraid of being alone. I need to be close. (It accomplishes exactly the opposite. The other feels crowded and tries to get away.)
- When I need to control the other or the situation.
- When I need to be needed.
- When I need to be taken care of.
- When I need to be taken paid attention to.
- When I fear I'm about to be rejected or abandoned (possibly because of my own crowding).

9. Taking Joy In Another's Accomplishments vs. Competition

Taking joy in the accomplishments of others (and expressing it) lifts us and brings us closer together. Competition, on the other hand, separates us and plies us against each other. It fosters aggression and resentment. It also fosters ego expansion. The spiritual path is about letting go of the ego experience.

Taking joy in another's accomplishments

In God's world there is harmony, an order that never competes. We are all indispensable parts of the greater whole.

- If you really care about my development, then you will find pleasure in my accomplishments.
- I can take joy in another's accomplishments because it takes nothing from me.

"I only want adult relationships with people who are able to really take joy in my accomplishments."

Competition

Competition is that miserable state of mind which can take no pleasure from another's accomplishments. It is death to relationships.

- We are taught to be competitive.
(We've been conditioned to believe that our supply comes from out there and we have to fight to get ours.)
- If we're competing, we're not *playing*. It's not a game, and we're not having fun.
 - We can play and enjoy the game without concern for winning or losing.
 - Happiness is found in the process of doing, not competing.
- Wanting to win is competition.
- Happiness is in the pursuit - wining is merely fun.
- Winning is goal oriented. It takes us out of enjoying the game now.
- The old saying, "It's not whether we win or lose, but how we play the game that counts" refers to our own sense of integrity. Integrity is joy producing.
- Achieving is different from winning.
- Competition allows us to compare ourselves with others and be envious or jealous (the two most miserable emotions).
- Being competitive with ourselves is just a sick. Beware of setting goals.

"I will not tolerate competition in my adult relationships."

**Breaking the Taking Joy in Another's
Accomplishments Contract = Competitive
Behavior**

What prevents taking joy in another's accomplishments?

- When I need to prove that I'm good enough, or accepted, or valued.
- When I'm afraid that if you accomplish things you won't need me.
- When I'm afraid that if you accomplish things you'll be better than me.
- When I'm afraid that if you accomplish things you'll be too good for me.
- When I need to be the center of attention.

If another's success makes us feel *less than*, we have to correct that within ourselves. It is our own spiritual error.

10. Responsibility vs. Irresponsibility

Response-ability means the ability to respond appropriately to those we are in relationships with. It not only requires being present, being in the here and now; it requires being in spiritual adult. If we are not present we are not able to respond appropriately because we're missing the real situation. If we are not in spiritual adult, we may operate out of fear, need or conditioning and find ourselves being rude, aggressive, oppressive, dishonest, manipulative, expectant, un-accepting, crowding, or competitive. These are all irresponsible behaviors. We are reacting out of our humanhood rather than spontaneously responding to the requirements of the moment.

One definition of life is an organism that is able to respond to its environment. As I increase in responsibility I increase how alive I am.

Responsibility

- Responsibility includes:
 - consistency of effort (always being alert for emotion, for slipping out of spiritual adult).

- following up (if you say you're going to do something "later," set a definite time to do so).
 - sincerity (maintaining an honest intent to adhere to all 10 NNS).
 - willingness to change (vs. fear of change).
 - patience, with each other and with ourselves.
- We need to schedule and prioritize so we have time in which to be responsive.
 - We also need to take responsibility for our own actions.
 - If we hurt someone, responsibility says we make amends. We take steps to restore the peace and clean up the mess.
 - I am not the cause of anyone else's pain, but I am responsible to clean up after my own actions.
 - No one is cause for my pain. My reaction caused my pain. I am responsible for correcting my own spiritual errors.

"I do on having responsibility in all my adult relationships."

Irresponsibility

Irresponsibility is not being able or willing to respond.

Examples of irresponsibility are:

- not trying
- not caring
- not showing up
- insincerity
- inertia
- fear of change
- impatience
- being too busy
- being inconsistent

"I am not willing to be in an adult relationship with anyone who is irresponsible."

✓ **Breaking Responsibility Contract =
Irresponsible Behavior**

What prevents responsibility?

- **When I'm afraid of not getting it right. (If I do nothing at all I won't do anything wrong.)**
- **When I'm afraid to change.**
- **When I need to be taken care of.**
- **When I'm totally self-centered.**
- **When I don't have enough spiritual adult in gear to be responsible.**
- **When I am unable to respond when asked (due to poor time management, or scheduling skills).**
- **When I believe that when I act irresponsibly it will not affect the**

relationship (irresponsibility
"doesn't matter").

Appendix A - Developing Spiritual Consciousness

In over 30 years of spiritual practice we have discovered three kinds of activities that help in developing spiritual consciousness. At Leelaa, the spiritual center where we conduct Relationship 101, Script and Kid workshops, we recommend and support all three.

1. Developing a regular meditation practice. Meditation makes us available for contact with our higher consciousness, opens us to insight and intuition, and expands our awareness. Expansion of our awareness of the presence of God is what expanding our spiritual adult means. Awareness is a faculty outside of and separate from thinking. There is no God Consciousness inside thought. We access God Consciousness, or awareness, by being still, "sitting in the silence," meditating. We strongly encourage developing the discipline of a daily meditation practice. We hold regular silent meditations at Leelaa for those who want to join in a group meditation.

2. Learning the letter of truth. Learning correct metaphysical and mystical truth expands our understanding and opens us to spiritual experiences. Studying truth, contemplating truth, immersing ourselves in truth, can lift us toward the meditative state. We can

learn the letter of truth by going to spiritual classes or workshops, reading spiritual books and listening to spiritual tapes or CDs. Be sure the books, tapes and CDs are the works of spiritual masters, not commentaries or popularized interpretations. The understanding that is desired is not intellectual understanding. It is the *consciousness* of truth. Make sure your teacher has this consciousness. Books, tapes and CDs of Robert Adams, Joel Goldsmith, Barbara Muhl, and other teachers, as well as previous classes and workshops at Leelaa are available there in the library.

3. Immersing ourselves in spiritual consciousness. Just as being immersed in human consciousness drags down our consciousness, being immersed in higher consciousness, such as working with a spiritual teacher and by associating with others who are doing the same work, especially those who are further along the path than we are, lifts it. When we separate, after coming together, we never lose the entire effect of being lifted. Hanging out with higher consciousness is cumulative. The others in our workshops, and those participating in the other activities at Leelaa comprise such a spiritual community.

How rapidly you progress in this work will be determined by how much spiritual work you do before and in conjunction

with the workshop. Speak to your teachers for advice on how to go about establishing a regular spiritual practice.

Appendix B - Feelings vs. Emotions

It is important to define terms clearly and use them correctly. What we say is what we believe. If our use of words is muddled, our thinking is muddy. It is useful to distinguish between feelings and emotions in this work as part of acquiring a precise vocabulary.

Feelings are simply what we feel: e.g. happiness, sadness, pain, fear, or loss. Our feelings are what are real about us at any given moment. They have no dialog. Feelings are not destructive. We never have to justify our feelings. Our feelings are us, the real us of the moment. Feelings change.

In relationship work, feelings need to be expressed. A relationship cannot survive without it. Expressing our feelings is a skill we need to develop in that work, as part of partnership communication.

Emotions are feelings *plus* the dialog going on in our heads about the feeling. For example, being hurt is a feeling. Suffering is an emotion; a self-pitying dialog has been added to the feeling ("Oh, woe is me," or, "This will never end," or "I'll always..." or "I'll never..."). Another name for emotion is drama.

We are the victims of our own emotions. Emotions are conditioned responses, based on old conclusions and previous

experiences. If we're having an emotion we're exhibiting a conditioned response. There are no valid or constructive emotions. Emotions are sick! They should never be expressed. We don't have the right to subject anyone to them.

If you're not sure whether you're having a feeling or an emotion, search for dialogue. If you are telling yourself anything about the feeling, it's emotion.

It is also useful to distinguish between judgment and evaluation. **Judgment** is in human consciousness and labels things as right or wrong, good or bad. These labels are conditioned by our own particular society. Then have no relation to reality. What is is neither good nor bad, right nor wrong. It simply is. **Evaluation** does not deal with dualities. It simply determines whether a behavior is effective for what is intended or not. If it is effective, we apply it; if not, we don't. We are told to judge not, lest we be judged; but we are not denied the right to make evaluations. Evaluations are a necessary part of human life. We learn to evaluate only, never judge.

And here's the difference between sympathy and empathy: Sympathy leads to do-gooding. It is ego-building. Empathy leads to the demonstration of compassion.

Appendix C - Script

This appendix is taken from The Script and Kid Workshop Handbook. For more information see that book (available at <http://www.leelaa.com>).

We use the term **script** to refer to the underlying fear-based beliefs we have about ourselves and our world. These beliefs are the driving forces behind all the miserable events in our lives. Every intolerable scene we have been involved in was caused by our own fear, fear based on erroneous beliefs we have formed about ourselves and others. These beliefs will not stand up to rational examination, but the rational mind is not involved. Parts of us which we often are not explicitly aware of, which we sometimes have repressed, believe them and are deathly afraid that they will happen.

Here are some examples:

- I will *never* be accepted.
- I will *always* be betrayed by those I trust.
- I will *never* get it right.
- I will *never* be taken care of.
- I will *always* be abandoned by those I love.
- I will *always* be ignored, and treated with indifference.

- I will *always* be thrown away when they find out who I really am
- I will *always* be ridiculed, shamed and cast out.

and the one we all share:

- I will never be good enough.

Rejection is the bottom-line message underpinning all these beliefs. They are variations on rejection, and, as we will discover in the workshop, the beliefs actually cause most of our rejection. Notice that they all begin with "I will *always*" or "I will *never*." The *always* and *never* are the source of the fear.

Script then is an emotional dialog about what we believe is going to happen to us. A **script event** works like this: We have our beliefs and are afraid that they will happen, although we may not be aware of this. This is our first part in the dialog. Soon we find someone to play the other role in the dialog. This means that he or she says or does something that confirms our belief. We *feel* that we are being ignored, betrayed, or abandoned; or we *hear* that we'll never get it right or be good enough.

Our next part in the dialog is that we have an emotional reaction to what we are feeling or hearing. The reaction is usually way out of proportion to what the other person said or did, since it is driven by our fear. Actually, as we'll discover soon, the fear is usually

more like terror. At this point we are **in script**, as we call this emotional state, and we are miserable. It's worth noting here that the other player in our script may actually have intended nothing or done nothing to us. Our fear may have colored our perception so completely that we misinterpreted a completely benign act as a confirmation of that fear.

The script event may continue: Our **script readers** may have scripts of their own, and our emotional reaction to our script being read may trigger (read) their script, in which case they will have an emotional reaction. And, of course, we will hear that emotional reaction as our script being read again, and react again.

We sometimes refer to our script readers as our **needles** since they seem to needle us into the emotional reaction. We often seem to be paired with our needles. We tend to marry, be born to or give birth to our needles. Bosses or others in positions of authority may also serve us as needles.

As an example, a lady whose script is "I will always be ignored or treated with indifference," might marry a man whose script is "I will always be controlled." At some point, since she is always on the lookout for her fear to be realized, he will appear to her to be ignoring her. (He might actually just be tired.

It might have absolutely nothing to do with her.) He's her needle.

Her emotional reaction to this will usually cause her to try to get him to pay attention to her. He may interpret this as an attempt to control him. Now she's his needle, reading his script. His emotional reaction might be to withdraw, to avoid being controlled. This, of course, will appear to her as being treated with indifference. She'll redouble her efforts to get him to appreciate her, causing him to withdraw further. They wind up screaming at each other.

This cycle will be repeated over and over again until they become so miserable that they either separate or shut down completely.

Appendix D - Kid

This appendix is taken from The Script and Kid Workshop Handbook. For more information see that book (available at <http://www.leelaa.com>).

We use the word **kid** to refer to the pieces of ourselves that are still immature emotionally and spiritually. They are our childish aspects.

When we are confronted with a situation that is beyond our ability to deal with, and we are not given sufficient support from others, the result may be trauma. One of the ways the human mechanism copes with situations that are too terrorizing to deal with is to repress them. The fears that were paralyzing us are shoved down into our subconscious, and we get on with our lives. We are no longer consciously aware of these repressed aspects, yet the fears they represent continue to dominate our lives. These repressed aspects, when they act out in our daily lives, seem to retain some of the personality aspects that were ours when the fears were repressed. These are our kids.

When the events that caused us to write our scripts occurred, we were too immature emotionally to recognize that the event was a single incident. Instead we generalized the event into an always or never thing, as children do. These

events, especially if they resulted in our death, were traumatic.

But repressing a fear doesn't remove it, so it continues to express itself as our experience. We come into life after life with subconscious fears, belonging to these repressed, childish aspects, and the script events repeat. And when a situation arises that looks like it might lead to our script being read, we go into fear, terror actually; the kid aspect takes over and we behave like children.

Another way of looking at kids is as representing the spiritually immature parts of ourselves. The fears that define our kids are all based in spiritual lies. Growing emotionally requires replacing the immature understandings of childhood with more mature understandings. Growing spiritually requires replacing the false beliefs of universal human consciousness with the corresponding spiritual truths.

Each kid corresponds to a script, that is, to a false belief. The scripts are carried in the kids' heads. The scripts are just their conclusions about life, the perceptions of the kids at a subconscious level. Kids are entirely human, and as such, they participate in the universal human consciousness, so what ever they conclude is radiated into, and reinforced by, the collective human consciousness.

Tearing up our scripts requires becoming conscious of the kid aspects of ourselves, discovering the lies our scripts are based on, learning the spiritual truths that contradict the lies, and turning ourselves away from the human belief to the spiritual truth.

We often talk about our kids as if they were separate from us, as if they were separate entities, and indeed they do have recognizable fears, likes, dislikes, and apparent ages. They do sometimes appear to be distinct personality centers, and this is a convenient way of referring to them, but we must keep in mind that in reality they are aspects of ourselves. The goal is to get enough spiritual adult working for us that these personality centers can be healed, raised up, **integrated** into our spiritual adult.

